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Motherhood deferred: U.S. median age for giving birth hits 30

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

For Allyson Jacobs, life in her 20s and 30s was about focusing on her career in health care and enjoying the social scene in New York City. It wasn't until she turned 40 that she and her husband started trying to have children. They had a son when she was 42.

Over the past three decades, that has become increasingly common in the U.S., as birthrates have declined for women in their 20s and jumped for women in their late 30s and early 40s, according to a new report from the U.S. Census Bureau. The trend has pushed the median age of U.S. women giving birth from 27 to 30, the highest on record.

As an older parent celebrating Mother's Day on

Sunday, Jacobs feels she has more resources for her son, 9, than she would have had in her 20s.

"There's definitely more wisdom, definitely more patience," said Jacobs, 52, who is a patients' services administrator at a hospital. "Because we are older, we had the money to hire a nanny. We might not have been able to afford that if we were younger."

While fertility rates dropped from 1990 to 2019 overall, the decline was regarded as rather stable compared to previous eras. But the age at which women had babies shifted.

Fertility rates declined by almost 43% for women between ages 20 and 24 and by more than 22% for women between 25 and 29.

Continued on next page



Allyson Jacobs stands for a portrait outside her workplace, Wednesday, May 4, 2022, in New York. Associated Press

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK

PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

SUNDAY:

TICO KOCK
STEEL DRUM
4 - 6pm

MONDAY:

ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

TUESDAY:

JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

WEDNESDAY:

CARLOS ORLATE
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

THURSDAY:

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

FRIDAY:

RICKY THOMAS
GUITAR
7 - 9pm

SATURDAY:

ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
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Continued from Front

At the same time, they increased by more than 67% for women between 35 and 39, and by more than 132% for women between 40 and 44, according to the Census Bureau analysis based on National Center for Health Statistics data.

Decisions by college-educated women to invest in their education and careers so they could be better off financially when they had children, as well as the desire by working-class women to wait until they were more financially secure, have contributed to the shift toward older motherhood, said Philip Cohen, a University of Maryland sociologist.

In the past, parents often relied on their children for income — putting them to work in the fields, for example, when the economy was more farm-based. But over the last century or more in the U.S., parents have become more invested in their children's futures, providing more support while they go to school and enter young adulthood, he said.

"Having children later mostly puts women in a better position," Cohen said. "They have more resources, more education. The things we demand of people to be good parents are easier to supply when you are older." Lani Trezzi, 48, and her husband had their first child, a son, when she was 38, and a daughter followed three years later. Even though she had been with her husband since she was 23, she felt no urgency to have children. That changed in her late 30s, once she'd



Abortion-rights supporters rally at the State Capitol, on May 3, 2022, in Oklahoma City.

Associated Press

reached a comfortable spot in her career as an executive for a retail company.

"It was just an age when I felt confident all around in the many areas of my life," said Trezzi, who lives in New Jersey, outside New York City. "I didn't have the confidence then that I have now."

Over the last three decades, the largest increases in the median age at which U.S. women give birth have been among foreign-born women, going from ages 27 to 32, and Black women, going from ages 24 to 28, according to the Census Bureau.

With foreign-born women, Cohen said he wasn't quite sure why the median age increased over time, but it likely was a "complicated story" having to do with their circumstances or reasons for coming to the U.S. For Black women, pursuing

an education and career played roles.

"Black women have been pursuing higher education at higher rates," said Raegan McDonald-Mosley, an obstetrician and gynecologist, who is CEO of Power to Decide, which works to reduce teen pregnancies and unwanted births. "Black women are becoming really engaged in their education and that is an incentive to delay childbearing."

Since unintended pregnancies are highest among teens and women in their 20s, and more of their pregnancies end in abortion compared to older women, ending Roe v. Wade would likely shift the start of childbearing earlier on average, in a reverse of the trend of the past three decades, "although the magnitude is unknown," said Laura Lindberg, principal research scientist at the

Guttmacher Institute, a research group that supports abortion rights.

"The burden will fall disproportionately on women of color, Black women, people without documentation, people living in rural areas, people in the South — where there are a lot of Black women — and in the Midwest," said McDonald-Mosley, who also has served previously as chief medical officer of Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Motherhood also has been coming later in developed countries in Europe and Asia. In the U.S., it could contribute to the nation's population slowdown since the ability to have children tends to decrease with age, said Kate Choi, a family demographer at Western University in London, Ontario.

In areas of the U.S. where the population isn't replac-

ing itself with births, and where immigration is low, population decline can create labor shortages, higher labor costs and a labor force that is supporting retirees, she said.

"Such changes will put significant pressure on programs aimed at supporting seniors like Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare," Choi said. "Workers may have to pay higher taxes to support the growing numbers of the retired population."

Although the data in the Census Bureau report stops in 2019, the pandemic over the past two years has put off motherhood even further for many women, with U.S. birth rates in 2020 dropping 4% in the largest single-year decrease in nearly 50 years. Choi said there appears to have been a bit of a rebound in the second half of 2021 to levels similar to 2019, but more data is needed to determine if this is a return to a "normal" decline. During the pandemic, some women at the end of their reproductive years may have given up on becoming parents or having more children because of economic uncertainties and greater health risks for pregnant women who get the virus, she said.

"These women may have missed their window to have children," Choi said. "Some parents of young children may have decided to forego the second ... birth because they were overwhelmed with the additional child-caring demands that emerged during the pandemic, such as the need to homeschool their children." □



The toes of a baby are seen DHR Health, July 29, 2020, in McAllen, Texas.

Associated Press

Liam and Olivia once again dominate top baby names list

By FATIMA HUSSEIN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Olivia and Liam are once again America's most common baby names. And Theodore joins the top 10 baby names list for the first time. The Social Security Administration annually tracks the names given to girls and boys in each state, with names dating back to 1880. The data is based on

applications for Social Security cards.

Based on cultural and demographic trends, the list shows how names can rise and fall in popularity.

Liam has reigned supreme five years in a row, while Olivia unseated Emma as the top name for the past three years, according to agency's list, which was released Friday.

After Liam, the most com-

mon names for boys in respective order: Noah, Oliver, Elijah, James, William, Benjamin, Lucas, Henry and Theodore.

And for girls, following Olivia: Emma, Charlotte, Amelia, Ava, Sophia, Isabella, Mia, Evelyn and Harper.

The "fastest rising" baby names — which signify the names growing in popularity — are Amiri for boys and Raya for girls. □

U.S. seeks to downplay role in sinking of Russian warship

By BEN FOX, AAMER MADHANI, and NOMAAN MERCHANT

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

The Biden administration sought Friday to downplay the role of American intelligence in the high-profile sinking of the Russian missile cruiser Moskva, distancing itself from any direct role in one of the greatest embarrassments for Russia since it attacked Ukraine.

A day after an American official confirmed that the U.S. provided Ukraine with information on the location of the ship, the White House and Pentagon described a limited role in last month's attack and said the Ukrainians make their own decisions.

The effort reflected the fine line President Joe Biden walks as he touts increasing support for Ukraine while fighting off criticism he isn't doing enough and simultaneously trying to avoid dragging the U.S. into a direct conflict with Russia.

"We had no prior knowledge of Ukraine's intent to target the ship," White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said. "The Ukrainians have their own intelligence capabilities to track and



Pentagon spokesman John Kirby speaks during a briefing at the Pentagon in Washington, Friday, May 6, 2022.

Associated Press

target Russian naval vessels, as they did in this case.

"Amid strong, bipartisan support for Ukraine, the administration has provided more than \$3.4 billion in military assistance, and U.S. forces are actively training Ukrainian troops in the use of howitzers, drones and other hardware in a war now focused on the eastern Donbas region of the country. The White House announced an additional \$150 million in military support

Friday that included artillery rounds, radar systems capable of detecting artillery projectiles, and other equipment.

Asked about reports that the U.S. provided intelligence on the Moskva, Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Ukraine receives "relevant and timely" intelligence from the U.S., but also gets assistance from other nations and makes its own decisions about how to use it.

"And if they do decide to

do something with that intelligence, then they make the decisions about acting on it," Kirby said.

American officials insist this is a fight launched by President Vladimir Putin against Ukraine, not a proxy war with the U.S., and the intelligence assistance stays within these limits.

The Pentagon spokesman said the U.S. had no advanced knowledge of the attack on the ship, the flagship of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

"We provide them what we believe to be relevant and timely information about Russian units that will allow them to adjust and execute their self-defense to the best of their ability," Kirby said. "The kind of intelligence that we provide them, it's legitimate, it's lawful, and it's limited."

An American official said Thursday that Ukraine alone decided to target and sink the Moskva using its own anti-ship missiles. But given Russia's attacks on the Ukrainian coastline from the sea, the U.S. has provided "a range of intelligence" that includes locations of those ships, said the official, who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Biden administration has ramped up intelligence sharing with Ukraine alongside the shipment of arms and missiles to help it repel Russia's invasion. The disclosure of U.S. support in the Moskva strike comes as the White House is under pressure from Republicans to do more to support Ukraine's resistance and as polls suggest some Americans question whether Biden is being tough enough on Russia. □

Census ready to study combining race, ethnicity questions

By MIKE SCHNEIDER

Associated Press

U.S. Census Bureau officials said Friday they are ready to start examining changes that would combine race and ethnicity questions and add a Middle Eastern and North African category to the 2030 census questionnaire, but they have to wait for another federal office to start the conversation.

That office is the White House Office of Management and Budget, which sets the definitions on race and ethnic background for all federal agencies. The Census Bureau has been using Office of Management and Budget standards which were set in 1997.

If the proposals are adopted for the 2030 census, they would mark one of

the biggest changes to the census questionnaire in recent years.

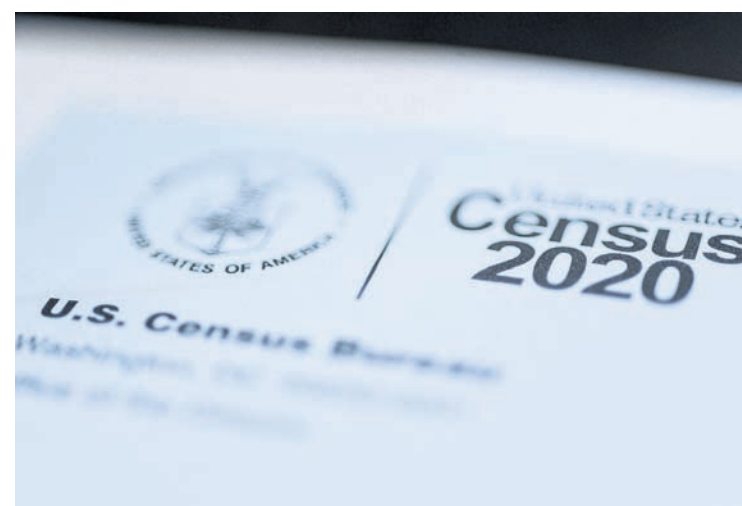
Several years before the last census in 2020, support was growing for combining the race and ethnicity questions into a single question and adding the Middle Eastern and North African category, also known as MENA. Census Bureau research said doing so would increase the accuracy of the once-a-decade U.S. head count, particularly among Hispanics and people of Middle Eastern or North African descent who are unsure how to answer the race question.

But those efforts were dropped after President Donald Trump became president. As a result, there was no MENA category, and the race and ethnicity

questions were separated on the 2020 census form, leading to overwhelmingly large numbers of Hispanic respondents to answer "some other race" for the race category, Census Bureau officials said.

"We are not surprised by the results. Our research predicted them," Merarys Rios-Vargas, chief of the Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch at the Census Bureau, told members of the Census Bureau's National Advisory Committee on Friday.

One of the committee members, Helen Hatab Samhan, a retired executive at the Arab American Institute, said it was preferable to add MENA as an ethnic category, such as Hispanic, rather than a race category like white, black, Asian, American Indian or



Residents have begun receiving the U.S. Census Bureau's request for information receiving letters with a census identification number to answer questions about their households online.

Associated Press

Native Hawaiian. Among the items the Census Bureau wants to research is the lack of responses to the race question among Hispanics, how Hispanics identified their

race when they did answer the question and whether the location of the respondents made any difference in whether they answered those questions, officials said. □

Sheriff: Car linked to Alabama escapee, jail worker found

By JAY REEVES
Associated Press

The getaway vehicle used by a man wanted for murder in Alabama and the jail official suspected of helping him escape after a "jailhouse romance" was found in an impound lot in Tennessee, where it sat for nearly a week before authorities realized they had it, officials said Friday.

Sheriff Rick Singleton of Lauderdale County, Alabama, told a news conference the Ford Edge with distinctive burnt orange paint was found on a roadside and towed the same day that Casey White, charged with murder, and former assistant corrections director Vicky White disappeared. The vehicle was found in a rural area off Interstate 65 about 100 miles (about 160 kilometers) from the jail in Florence, Alabama.

Authorities in Williamson County, Tennessee, realized they had the vehicle Thursday night, which was hours after U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said the two, who aren't related, are "regarded as extremely dangerous," and the U.S. Marshals Service has taken over leading the search.

Officials have said they hoped Casey White's size — 6-foot-9 and 340 pounds — would help lead to his capture since it's hard for him to be inconspicuous. He also has identifiable



U.S. Marshal Marty Keely speaks regarding Vicky White, Lauderdale County Assistant Director of Corrections, and escaped inmate Casey White during a news conference outside of the Lauderdale County Courthouse in Florence, Ala., Monday, May 2, 2022.

Associated Press

white supremacist tattoos. He and Vicky White appeared to have had a "jailhouse romance" before his escape, Singleton said.

"They found the car before we even knew they were gone," said Singleton. Some of Vicky White's belongings were found in the vehicle, which someone had attempted to spray paint, he said.

The tow truck driver who hauled the vehicle to a lot likely saw news coverage about the escape and notified police in Tennessee, Singleton said.

"There's no fault or blame

on anyone," he said.

The Williamson County Sheriff's Office said the vehicle had been found in Bethesda and there was no indication the two remained in the area.

A nationwide manhunt has been ongoing since the pair disappeared April 29. Casey White was awaiting trial in a capital murder case and Vicky White was assistant director of corrections for Lauderdale County. She appears to have helped him plan and execute the escape, Singleton said.

Authorities are now try-

ing to determine whether any vehicles had been reported missing in the area where the car was found, he said.

"We're sort of back to square one with a vehicle description," said Singleton, adding at one point: "We're behind where we'd like to be." The two likely had mechanical problems with the car and left it where it was found in a remote area, said Singleton. The sheriff said he was worried for the safety of his former employee because Casey White is "volatile" and could turn on her at any time. No weap-

ons were found in the car, indicating that the two are still armed, said Singleton. "My gut is telling me they are obviously on the run," he said. On the day the pair disappeared, Vicky White, 56, told her coworkers that the 38-year-old inmate needed to go to the courthouse for a mental health evaluation. She was escorting the inmate alone — a violation of the sheriff's office policy. When she did not answer her phone or return in the afternoon, authorities realized the pair had gone missing. Authorities eventually learned that the evaluation was never scheduled and was just a charade to allow Vicky White to sneak Casey White out of the jail without suspicion.

The two left in a patrol car, which was found abandoned nearby in a parking lot where investigators believe Vicky White had parked a getaway car.

In the past week, authorities have learned that Vicky White purchased an array of weapons, including an AR-15 rifle in January and a shotgun two weeks before the escape. They also believe she has a 9 mm handgun with her and have received reports she may also have a .45 caliber handgun, a federal marshal said.

Federal investigators believe they had been planning the escape for at least several months. □

Former Parkland sheriff will head much smaller police force



In this Oct. 21, 2019 file photo, former Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel appears before the Senate Rules Committee concerning his dismissal by Gov. Ron DeSantis, in Tallahassee, Fla.

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The Florida sheriff ostracized for his agency's response to the high school massacre in Parkland that left 17 people dead will again be heading a law enforcement agency as the police chief of a small South Florida municipality.

Former Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel was appointed police chief of Opa-locka in an announcement made by city manager Darvin Williams at a ceremony Friday. Opa-locka is part of Miami-Dade County.

Williams said the former

sheriff will start Monday and oversee 47 officers. Broward's sheriff's office has about 5,600 employees, including about 2,700 deputies and about 700 firefighters.

Israel said he was looking forward to serving the people of Opa-locka and thanked God for the opportunity.

"I won't let you down," Israel said Friday.

Israel was removed from office by Gov. Ron DeSantis in 2019, nearly a year after the February 2018 massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in

Parkland, saying the sheriff displayed poor leadership and failed to keep children safe during the mass shooting.

DeSantis appointed Gregory Tony to take over the sheriff's office in Broward. Then Tony beat Israel in the Democratic primary for the position in 2020 and went on to win the general election.

In 2021, Israel was hired by the police department in Davie, Florida, a municipality in Broward County, to review five red light cameras and appear in court if anyone challenged a ticket. □

Experts worried by rise of cocaine processing in Europe

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Records amounts of cocaine are being seized in Europe while manufacturing of the drug is now taking place inside the the European Union, officials in charge of fighting and monitoring drugs use in the bloc warned on Friday. More than 214 tons of cocaine were seized in Europe in 2020, a 6% increase from the previous year, and experts from the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) believe that amount could reach 300 tons in 2022.

With a market retail value estimated at 10.5 billion euros in 2020 and about 3.5 million European citizens reporting having used it in the past year, cocaine is the second most used drug in the EU after cannabis.

Its availability in Europe has never been higher, with extremely high purity and low prices.

While most cocaine manufacturing still occurs in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia, EU experts are worried by the processing now taking place inside the 27-nation bloc, particularly in Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands.

Between 2018 and 2020, 45



Bales of cocaine weighting some 5.2 tons and a seized yacht are displayed for the media at a Portuguese Navy base in Almada, south of Lisbon, on Oct. 18, 2021.

Associated Press

illicit production laboratories were discovered in the EU.

Speaking at a news conference in Brussels, Laurent Laniel, a scientific analyst at the EMCDDA, said that cocaine powder is often smuggled from South America to Europe in carrier materials such as charcoal and plastics, then extracted in local laboratories.

Alexis Goosdeel, the EMCDDA

director, said the availability on the continent of large amounts of cocaine base and paste increases the risk of seeing new forms of highly addictive crack emerging on European markets.

"We are now facing a growing threat from a more diverse and dynamic drug market that is driven by closer collaboration between European and international criminal orga-

nizations," he said. "This has resulted in record levels of drug availability, rising violence and corruption, and greater health problems." The expansion of the cocaine market also saw a rise in violence and corruption in the EU, with fierce competition between traffickers leading to a rise in homicides and intimidation.

"Violence nowadays is a key feature for criminal or-

ganizations to make sure that they are the strongest in their business area," De Bolle said. "The violence has also a direct impact on citizens on the streets because we see people dying on the streets in the European Union."

EU experts also looked at the growing methamphetamine market, which has been spreading in recent years after being initially concentrated in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2020, a total of 215 methamphetamine laboratories were dismantled in the region, according to reports from nine EU countries.

According to Europol, the EU agency for law enforcement, European manufacturers of synthetic drugs are working in cahoots with Mexican cartels to increase production.

"We see a clear link, Europe-Mexico," said Europol's executive director, Catherine De Bolle. "Mexican people, drugs criminals from the cartels are active on the European soil."

Chemists from Mexico come to the European Union because they are specialized in the production and in the use of methamphetamine. So we see that they are active in the labs." □

With Ukraine's ports blocked, trains in Europe haul grain

By **PHILIPP-MORITZ JENNE**

VIENNA (AP) —

A train carrying 2,000 metric tons of Ukrainian corn arrived in Austria on Friday, part of European efforts to elude a Russian blockade of Ukraine's ports that has prevented critical supplies of wheat, corn and other grains from getting to countries in Africa, Middle East and parts of Asia. Standing in front of a rail car adorned with the Austrian and Ukrainian flags, Austria's farming minister, Elisabeth Koestinger, said the shipment marked the establishment of a "green corridor" for important cargo shipments between the two countries.

"Grain and animal feed exports can't leave Ukraine

via the sea route. That's why we are creating green corridors," Koestinger said. The shipment comes amid a wider struggle to cope with disruptions to global food supplies triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, with both countries two of the world's biggest suppliers of wheat, barley and sunflower oil. Russia is also a major exporter of fertilizers that farmers need to grow crops.

The potential loss of affordable grain supplies that millions around the world rely on for cheap bread and noodles has raised the risk of food shortages and political instability in countries where many people already were not getting enough to eat. With food

prices already soaring, the high cost of fertilizers and cooking oils are further squeezing the global food chain.

To help ease the crunch in a small way, trains will carry up to 60,000 metric tons of grain from Ukraine to Austria every month, adding to similar shipments to Germany. Those exports circumvent Russia's blockade of Odesa, Ukraine's largest port, on the Black Sea.

The Ukrainian ambassador to Austria, Vasyl Khymynets, called the new land route an important symbol of Ukraine's cooperation with its partners.

"We are looking for routes to supply the world with food," he said.

Khymynets said 600,000



A freight train with fodder maize, arriving from the Ukraine arrives in Vienna, Austria, Friday, May 6, 2022.

Associated Press

metric tons of Ukrainian grain could potentially be exported every month via various land routes just a fraction of Ukraine's export

capacity of 25 million tons. The initial Austrian shipment was purchased by animal feed producer in that country. □

Israel searches for attackers who killed 3 in mass stabbing

By JOSEPH KRAUSS

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli security forces took part in a massive manhunt Friday for two Palestinians suspected of carrying out a stabbing rampage near Tel Aviv that left three Israelis dead.

The stabbing on Thursday, Israel's Independence Day, was the latest in a series of deadly assaults deep inside the country in recent weeks. It came as Israeli-Palestinian tensions were already heightened by violence at a major holy site in Jerusalem sacred to Jews and Muslims.

Police said they were searching for two suspects, 19 and 20 years old, from the town of Jenin in the occupied West Bank, which has re-emerged as a militant bastion in the latest wave of violence the worst Israel has seen in years. Several attackers have come from in or around Jenin, and Israeli forces have launched arrest raids that have ignited gunbattles there.

"We will get our hands on the terrorists and their supportive environment, and they will pay the price," Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said after huddling with senior security officials late Thursday. Authorities said the attackers fled in a



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish mourners encircle a man overcome with grief at the funeral for Yonatan Havakuk and Boaz Gol, a day after they were killed in a stabbing attack in Elad, Israel, Friday, May 6, 2022.

vehicle.

Medics described a horrific scene in Elad, an ultra-Orthodox town near Tel Aviv. In addition to the three killed, four others were wounded, one of them critically. Police said at least one of the assailants wielded an axe in the attack.

Israeli media identified those killed as Yonatan Havakuk, Boaz Gol and Oren Ben Yiftah, three fathers in their 30s and 40s who together are survived by

16 children. Ben Yiftah, 35 years old and the father of six, was from the central city of Lod. The city's mayor, Yair Revivo, said "our heart breaks into tiny pieces" in a Facebook post, calling it a "great tragedy."

Israel marked its Independence Day on Thursday, a festive national holiday in which people typically hold barbecues and attend air shows.

Defense Minister Benny Gantz extended a closure

on the West Bank, imposed ahead of the holiday to prevent Palestinians from entering Israel, to remain in effect until Sunday.

In Washington, Secretary of State Antony Blinken condemned the "horrific attack targeting innocent men and women."

Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid spoke with his Emirati counterpart, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who "strongly condemned" the attack in

Elad, according to a statement from Lapid's office.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose government administers autonomous zones in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and cooperates with Israel on security, also condemned the attack.

"The killing of Palestinian and Israeli civilians leads only to more deterioration at a time when all of us try to achieve stability and prevent escalation," the official Wafa news agency quoted him as saying.

The Palestinian militant group Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, praised the attack and linked it to violence at the Jerusalem holy site.

"The storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque can't go unpunished," Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem said. "The heroic operation in Tel Aviv is a practical translation of what the resistance had warned against."

The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is the third holiest site in Islam and is built on a hilltop that is the holiest site for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount. It lies at the emotional heart of the conflict, and Palestinians and Israeli police have clashed there repeatedly in recent weeks. □

Associated Press

Australia seeks friendship with Solomons despite China pact



Australian Minister of Defense Peter Dutton, poses for a group photograph with Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at the State Department in Washington, Thursday, Sept. 16, 2021.

Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Australia's defense minister said Friday that his nation wants to continue having a strong friendship with the Solomon Islands despite it signing a security pact with China.

Speaking on Australia's Nine Network "Today" show, Peter Dutton said Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare has been very clear that he is not going to allow a Chinese military base to be built on the islands and Australia is taking him at his word.

"The deal that has been signed between the Solomon Islands and China allows for a security presence on the Solomon Islands, that's the whole basis of the agreement," Dutton

added.

He said Sogavare "didn't have a bad word to say about Australia" in the leadup to signing the pact with China last month.

"He's not saying that he doesn't trust Australia or that he's unhappy with the relationship, quite the opposite, in fact, but the Chinese operate by a very different rule than we do," Dutton said. "We see that in Africa and elsewhere, and the presence of a security force within the Solomon Islands is a key aspect of the agreement that they've signed."

Sogavare told lawmakers in Parliament this week that opponents of the security pact have demonstrated a lack of trust and insulted his

country.

Sogavare did not name the opponents.

Both the United States and Australia have said a Chinese military presence in the Solomons less than 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles) from northeastern Australia would not be tolerated.

They haven't been more specific.

The pact has become an issue in campaigning before Australia holds elections on May 21.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison has defended his government's management of relations with the Solomon Islands, while opposition leaders have said the pact is an Australian foreign policy failure. □

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SOLANIO

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Mexico closes U.S. gravel quarry that had been pressured

By MARK STEVENSON

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The Mexican government said Friday it has closed a limestone gravel quarry owned by a U.S. company, a move likely to add fuel to an ongoing trade dispute with the firm.

The Environment Department said Friday it closed the quarry owned by Vulcan Materials near Playa del Carmen, on the Caribbean coast. Parts of the quarry have been excavated below the water table, and the department said the mining threatened water quality and subsoil conditions.

But the timing of the move raised questions: Vulcan has been operating the quarry for around three decades, and President Andrés Manuel López Obrador had recently threatened the company.

López Obrador wants the water-filled quarry to be used as a theme park to rival the nearby Xcaret park. He also wants Vulcan to build a cruise ship dock



Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador speaks during a joint statement with Guatemalan President Alejandro Giammattei at the National Palace in Guatemala City, Thursday, May 5, 2022.

Associated Press

at a freight terminal it operates on the coast. He has pressured the Alabama-based aggregates company to sell the property to

the government, or open a water park itself.

Vulcan issued a statement Thursday saying it "strongly believes that this action by

the Mexican government is illegal."

"The Company has the necessary permits to operate and intends to vigor-

ously pursue all lawful avenues available to it in order to protect its rights and resume normal operations," it said.

The company's property includes several adjoining sites; some have already been quarried, and others haven't. In late 2018 the company filed for an arbitration panel under the old North American Free Trade Agreement, after Mexico refused to allow quarrying at some of the sites.

The company said a decision is expected in the second half of 2022. The Environment Department said the company is seeking about \$1.5 billion in damages.

The Mexican government originally said a tentative agreement had been reached with Vulcan Materials, and the company said it was willing to open a water park and cruise ship facility. But it has no experience at doing either, and would really just like to continue mining gravel. □

Powerful blast at Havana hotel kills 8 people, injures 40

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ

HAVANA (AP) — A powerful explosion apparently caused by a natural gas leak Friday killed eight people and injured at least 40 when it blew away outer walls from a five-star hotel in the heart of Cuba's capital.

No tourists were staying at the 96-room Hotel Saratoga because it was undergoing renovations, Havana Gov. Reinaldo García Zapata told the Communist Party newspaper Granma. "It has not been a bomb or an attack. It is a tragic ac-

cident," President Miguel Díaz-Canel, who visited the site, said in a tweet. The blast happened as Cuba is struggling to revive its key tourism sector that was devastated by the coronavirus pandemic.

Cuba's national health minister, José Ángel Portal, told The Associated Press that hospitals had received about 40 injured people, but estimated that the number could rise as the search continues for people who may be trapped between the debris of the 19th century structure in

the Old Havana neighborhood of the city.

Granma reported that local officials said 13 people were missing. An elementary school next to the hotel was evacuated and local news media said no children were hurt.

Police cordoned off the area as firefighters and rescue workers toiled inside the wreckage of the hotel, which is about 110 yards (100 meters) from Cuba's Capitol building. The hotel has been used frequently by visiting VIPs and political figures. □



A photographer documents the five-star Hotel Saratoga after it was destroyed by a deadly explosion in Old Havana, Cuba, Friday, May 6, 2022.

Associated Press

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Honoring of loyal visitors at Costa Linda Beach Resort

EAGLE BEACH - Recently, Aruba Tourism Authority representative Marouska Heyliger had the great pleasure in honoring many loyal Aruba visitors with their distinctive certificates. These certificates are a way to say "Masha Danki" for continuously choosing Aruba as a favorite vacation destination. The titles are as following: 10+ years "Distinguished Visitor", 20+ years "Goodwill Ambassador" and 36+ years "Emerald Ambassador".

The honorees were **Scott and Sandra Mizenko**, residents of Wallingford CT, who have been honored as Goodwill Ambassadors.

The couple loves coming to the island for its white sandy beaches and its friendly Aruban people. They added that "Aruba is one of the safest to live & travel. It has Amazing sunsets. Costa Linda is my second home & staff became my family."

Heyliger together with the representatives of Costa Linda Beach Resort presented the certificates to the honorees, handed over some presents and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination and as their home-away-from-home. □



Aruba to Me



ORANJESTAD - We would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

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For this year's celebration of Mother's Day, we would like to portrait how you celebrate! Send us how you celebrated with

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For Directions

Real economic growth in 2021 driven by strong tourism recovery

ORANJESTAD - Today the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) published the State of the Economy for the fourth quarter of 2021. This publication provides a synopsis of the local and international economic developments of this period. The domestic highlights are presented below.

Strong rebound of the Aruban economy during 2021

During 2021, the Aruban economy grew by an estimated 17.9 percent, after contracting by 22.3 percent in 2020. On the output level, however, economic activities in 2021 remained below that of 2019. The aforementioned growth was driven mainly by the strong recovery in stay-over visitors and their spending. Another key driver of growth was domestic consumption, which was sustained by government support measures, such as the Emergency Social Assistance Fund (FASE), as well as the wage subsidy program. While the estimated GDP for the first quarter of 2021 declined, the following quarters of 2021 showed signs of robust rebound compared to the year before, rising more than 30 percent in each subsequent quarter.

Tourism performed well in 2021, but remained below pre-pandemic levels

Stay-over arrivals regained growth in 2021, but did not reach pre-pandemic levels. In 2021, numbers of stay-

Table 1: Tourism indicators for Aruba

Indicator	2020	2021	Change	% Change
Stay over visitors	368,322	806,540	438,218	119.0
Total visitors nights	2,895,628	6,007,047	3,111,419	107.5
Cruise visitors (numbers)	255,384	135,953	119,431	-46.8
Hotel occupancy rate (%)	34.9	69.0	34.1*	-
Revenue per available room (in USD)	96.3	232.9	136.6	141.9
Tourism credits** (in Afl. million)	1,513.2	2,594.4	1,081.2	71.5
Sources: CBA, ATA, AHATA, APA, CTO, STR				
*Percentage points				
**Only those registered at local commercial banks				

over visitors strengthened by 72.1 percent in 2019 terms. Total visitor nights in 2021 more than doubled compared to 2020 (Table 1). Revenue per available room surged by 141.9 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, pushed up by the higher hotel occupancy rate in 2021. The hotel occupancy rate practically increased twofold from 34.9 percent in 2020 to 69.0 percent in 2021. Tourism credits jumped by 71.5 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, reaching a level of Afl. 2,594.4 million at the end of 2021. Cruise tourism to Aruba in 2021, however, significantly lagged behind the low performance displayed in 2020, as the first cruise ship to arrive in Aruba docked on June 9, 2021.

Financial deficit narrowed

in 2021, while government debt expanded

On the fiscal side, the financial deficit for 2021 (Afl. 475.2 million) narrowed compared to 2020 (Afl. 813.6 million). This relatively smaller deficit was a reflection of the economic recovery gaining momentum as of the second quarter of 2021. While government revenues inched up in 2021 compared to 2020, the government expenditures declined by 16.9 percent in 2021 compared to the previous year.

Government debt expanded by Afl. 506.8 million to Afl. 5,652.5 million at the end of 2021 compared to December 2020, as the debt burden continued to grow due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The share of foreign government debt in 2021 continued its steady

ascent to 62.7 percent of total debt. The share of foreign government debt rose continuously as of the second quarter of 2020, when the government of Aruba began receiving short-term loans from the Netherlands as liquidity support. The estimated debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 108.7 percent at the end of 2021, down from 114.9 percent in 2020.

Inflation in Aruba is trending up

Higher gasoline prices on the international market caused inflation to trend up during 2021. At the end of the fourth quarter of 2021, the end-of-period inflation in Aruba rose by 3.6 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2020 (Chart 2). The end-of-period inflation started to flare up as of December 2020.

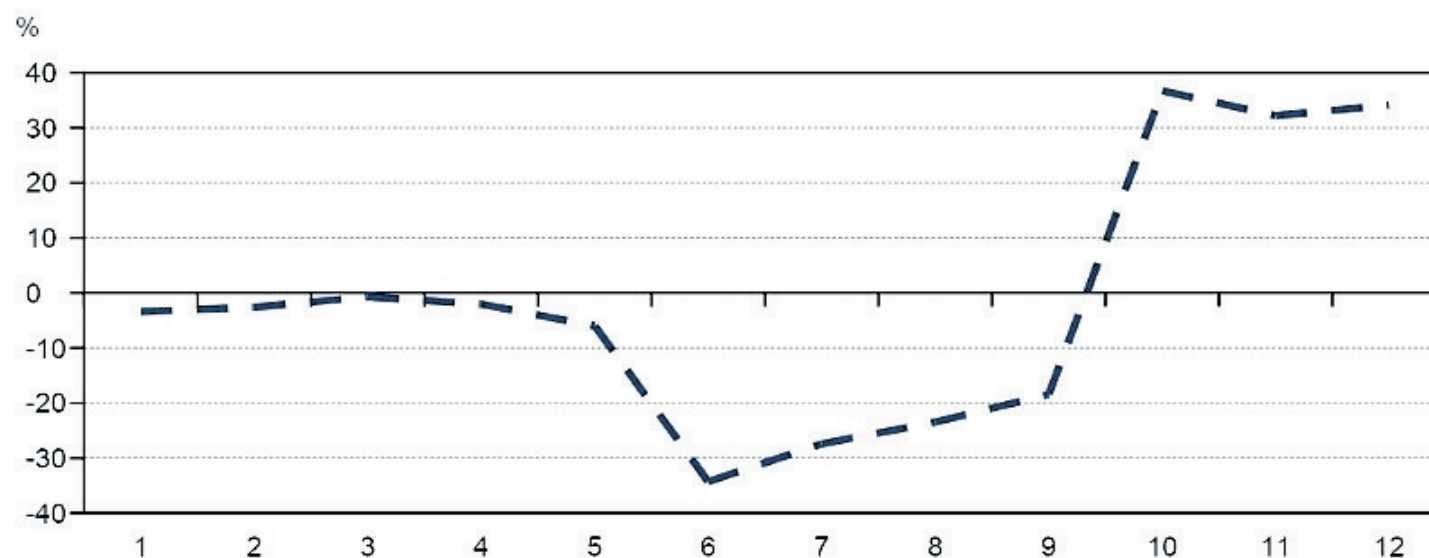
The 12-month average inflation rate, on the rise since May 2021, reached 0.7 percent at the end of December 2021. Nonetheless, consumer prices in the USA rose faster than those in Aruba, particularly due to the fact that utility prices stayed unchanged, creating an improved competitive position for Aruba compared to the United States of America.

International and official reserves remained adequate conform the monitored benchmarks

The level of international and official reserves was again adequate in 2021, according to the benchmarks monitored by the CBA. International reserves (incl. revaluation differences) grew to Afl. 3,130.6 million in 2021 (+Afl. 776.8 million) compared to end-2020 (Chart 3). The main contributors of the gain in international reserves throughout 2021 were the short-term loans that were provided by the Dutch government to the Government of Aruba to cover its large liquidity needs. These loans were complemented by recovered foreign exchange inflows related to tourism services.

The complete publication is available on the CBA's website (<https://www.cba-ruba.org/document/state-of-the-economy>). □

Chart 1: Quarterly GDP growth year-over-year



Do you need a grad degree to compete right now? Probably not

By ANNA HELHOSKI of NerdWallet

More U.S. workers than ever hold a graduate degree. Years of intensifying job requirements and headlines declaring a master's "the new bachelor's degree" nudged a record number of students into grad school.

And yet more well-paying jobs no longer require a college degree at all. In this tight labor market, do college grads need a master's degree to compete? Maybe not.

"We have all reduced our almost obsession with the master's degree," says Johnny C. Taylor Jr., CEO and president of the Society for Human Resource Management.

Anecdotal and statistical evidence shows employers were already pulling back degree requirements even before the pandemic: Data from a job market analysis done by the Burning Glass Institute show a reduction in middle-skills and high-skills requirements — jobs that require more education than a high school diploma — from 2017 to 2019. If fewer employers are requiring grad degrees to gain entrance to good jobs, prospective students should assess whether advanced degrees are worth taking on debt.

SOME FIELDS STILL REQUIRE ADVANCED DEGREES

Advanced degrees are still the key to entering certain professions: Medicine, law and teaching come to mind. In other fields, as long as you can convey you have the skills an employer is looking for, you can get a job without an advanced degree, says Brad Hershbein, senior economist and deputy director of research for the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

ADVANCED DEGREES COULD HEDGE AGAINST A RECESSION

Employers are likely reducing education requirements to fill slots, which can be difficult in a tight labor market like this one, experts say. But that doesn't mean it will last.



Graduates of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley attend their commencement ceremony at the schools parking lot on Friday, May 7, 2021, in Edinburg, Texas.

Associated Press

"Nobody can quite explain what we're going through now; I think everyone thinks it's temporary," says Gordon Lafer, a professor in the Labor Education & Research Center at the University of Oregon.

Holding an advanced degree could provide a safeguard for the future. If the economic tide turns, Taylor says, the degree becomes a differentiator.

Advanced degrees tend to correlate with lower unemployment rates compared with bachelor's or associate degrees. But generally, any degree acts as a buffer against unemployment. During the Great Recession, those with bachelor's degrees and higher were more likely to keep their jobs, according to 2014 research by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. The same goes for job retention during the early days of the pandemic, according to June 2020 data from The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS DON'T ALWAYS PAY OFF

What consumers need is data that show program-specific outcomes like graduates' employment rates and average salaries.

These are woefully difficult to find. For example, the College Scorecard, a data tool from the U.S. Department of Education, which provides information on outcomes like graduation rates and post-graduate salaries, doesn't include graduate-level data by major.

The lack of transparency makes it harder for prospective students to make an informed decision. And that could lead some to end up with debt they're unable to repay.

"Not everyone realizes there's a risk that it's a bad financial investment," says Hershbein.

Graduate loan debt has reached an all-time high, according to data from the federal government and think tanks like the Center for American Progress and Brookings.

Unlike undergraduate loans, which have stricter limits on the amount of

debt students can take on annually, federal Grad PLUS and private graduate loans allow students to borrow up to the cost of attendance, so it's easier to rack up debt.

Your earnings after attaining a grad degree will largely depend on your field and employer. Outcomes in some fields are easier to predict than in others, says Hershbein.

"Teachers' master's degrees are carefully calibrated; based on union contracts they know what the pay is going to be," says Hershbein. But outcomes for master's in areas like public policy or fine arts are more of an unknown, he adds.

MASTER'S PROGRAMS ARE NOT ALL EQUAL

Where you get your degree also matters. "If you're getting an online master's degree from the University of Phoenix it will pay off less than a master's degree from the University of Penn-

sylvania," Hershbein says.

Taylor says the nature of remote learning during the pandemic erased some of the bias around online programs, but employer preference is still skewed toward degrees from elite colleges.

"I think we have to be honest with ourselves: There's always an elitism that plays itself into the hiring process," says Taylor.

For graduate students, attending a highly selective university might help them make professional connections to more easily get a job. And grad programs are "cash cows" for universities, says Hershbein. Universities count on the prestige of their undergraduate degrees to attract graduate students into expensive programs.

Students then rack up exorbitant debt for degrees that might not pay off.

An estimated 40% of master's degree programs do not pay off at all, according to February 2022 data from the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, a nonprofit think tank.

The uncertainty means prospective students will need to do some legwork to prevent graduate school from harming their finances more than it helps their employment prospects. That means graduate applicants should:

- Start with the graduate program costs on a school's website.

- Search earnings and entry-level degree requirements for occupations using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook.

- Scour other tools that list program types and outcomes by degree level including the Wall Street Journal and the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. □



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CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

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10 Crack up
12 Danger
13 Ordered display
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15 Start for pitch or mo
16 Setting item
18 Dramatist Jonson
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9 Oryx's cousin
11 Health class
17 Tympanic mem-brane
20 Clue room
21 Some skirts
23 Fools
25 Grow up
26 Portland setting
27 Excitation
28 Famed cellist
29 Bud holders
31 Coup — Zeus
33 Son of Zeus
36 Throw in
38 French article

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Yesterday's answer

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5-7

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-7 **CRYPTOQUOTE**
KOUKFY PGBGBXGP SDKS FQL
KPG KXYQOLSGOF LZWNLG.
VLYS OWEG GRGPFQZG GOYG.

— BKPCCKPGS BGKJ
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I REFUSE TO JOIN ANY CLUB THAT WOULD HAVE ME AS A MEMBER. — GROUCHO MARX

How does it f-e-e-e-e-l? Bob Dylan museum opening in Tulsa



Steven Jenkins, director of the Bob Dylan Center and archive, poses for a photo at the archive wall, Thursday, May 5, 2022, in Tulsa, Okla.

Associated Press

By DAVID BAUDER
AP Media Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Elvis Costello, Patti Smith and Mavis Staples will be among the dignitaries expected in Tulsa, Oklahoma, this weekend for the opening of the Bob Dylan Center, the museum and archive celebrating the Nobel laureate's work. Dylan himself won't be among them, unless he surprises everyone. The center's subject and namesake has an open invitation to come anytime, although his absence seems perfectly in character, said Steven Jenkins, the center's director. Oddly, Dylan was just in Tulsa three weeks ago for a date on his concert tour, sandwiched in between Oklahoma City and Little Rock, Arkansas. He didn't ask for a look around.

"I don't want to put words in his mouth," Jenkins said. "I can only guess at his reasoning. Maybe he would find it embarrassing." It's certainly unusual for a living figure — Dylan is due to turn 81 on May 24 — to have a museum devoted to him, but such is the shadow he has cast over popular music since his emergence in the early 1960s. He's still working, performing onstage in a show devoted primarily to his most recent material. And he's still pushing the envelope. "Murder Most Foul," Dylan's nearly 17-minute rumination on the Ken-

nedy assassination and celebrity, is as quietly stunning as "Like a Rolling Stone" was nearly a half-century ago, even if he's no longer at the center of popular culture. The center offers an immersive film experience, performance space, a studio where visitors can play producer and "mix" different elements of instrumentation in Dylan's songs and a curated tour where people can take a musical journey through the stages of his career. The archive has more than 100,000 items, many accessed only by scholars through appointment.

Museum creators said they wanted to build an experience both for casual visitors who might not know much of Dylan's work and for the truly fanatical — the skimmers, the swimmers and the divers, said designer Alan Maskin of the firm Olson Kundig. The museum hopes to celebrate the creative process in general, and at opening will have an exhibit of the work of photographer Jerry Schatzberg, whose 1965 image of Dylan is emblazoned on the building's three-story facade.

Since Dylan's still creating, "we're going to continue to play catch-up" with him, Jenkins said.

So for a figure who was born and raised in Minnesota, came of musical age in New York and now lives in California, how does a museum devoted to his

life's work end up in Oklahoma?

He's never seemed the nostalgic type, but Dylan recognized early that his work could have historical interest and value, Jenkins said. Together with his team, he put aside boxes full of artifacts, including photos, rare recordings and handwritten lyrics that show how his songs went through revisions and rewrites.

With use of those lyrics, two of the early displays will focus on how the songs "Jokerman" and "Tangled Up in Blue" took shape — the latter with lyrics so elastic that Dylan was still changing verses after the song had been released. Dylan sold his archive in 2016 to the Tulsa-based George Kaiser Family Foundation, which also operates the Woody Guthrie Center — a museum that celebrates one of Dylan's musical heroes and is only steps away from the new Dylan center.

Dylan likes the Guthrie museum, and also appreciates Tulsa's rich holdings of Native American art, Jenkins said. Much of that is on display at another new facility, the Gilcrease Museum, which is also the world's largest holding of art of the American West.

"I think it's going to be a true tourist draw to Tulsa for all the right reasons," said Tulsa Mayor G. T. Bynum. "This is one of the great musicians in the history of humankind and everyone who wants to study his career and see the evolution of his talent will be drawn to it."

Bynum hopes that it also encourages others who may someday want to put their archives on display, and make Tulsa a center for the study of modern American music.

Dylan designed and built a 16-foot-high metal sculpture that will be displayed at the entrance to the museum. Otherwise, he had nothing to do with the museum's design and declined, through a spokesman, to offer a comment about the opening. □

Virus found in pig heart used in human transplant

By **LAURAN NEERGAARD**
AP Medical Writer

Researchers trying to learn what killed the first person to receive a heart transplant from a pig have discovered the organ harbored an animal virus but cannot yet say if it played any role in the man's death. A Maryland man, 57-year-old David Bennett Sr., died in March, two months after the groundbreaking experimental transplant. University of Maryland doctors said Thursday they found an unwelcome surprise — viral DNA inside the pig heart. They did not find signs that this bug, called porcine cytomegalovirus, was causing an active infection. But a major worry about animal-to-human transplants is the risk that it could introduce new kinds of infections to people.

Because some viruses are "latent," meaning they lurk without causing disease, "it could be a hitchhiker," Dr. Bartley Griffith, the surgeon who performed Bennett's transplant, told The Associated Press.

Still, development is under way of more sophisticated tests to "make sure that we don't miss these kinds of viruses," added Dr. Muhammad Mohiuddin, scientific director of the university's xenotransplant program. The animal virus was first reported by MIT Technology Review, citing a scientific presentation Griffith gave to the American Society of Transplantation last month. For decades, doctors have tried using animal organs to save human lives without success. Bennett, who was dying and ineligible for a human heart transplant, underwent the last-ditch operation using a heart from a pig genetically modified to lower the risk that his immune system would rapidly reject such a foreign organ.

The Maryland team said the donor pig was healthy, had passed testing required by the Food and Drug Administration to check for infections, and was raised in a facility designed to prevent animals from spreading infections. Revivicor, the



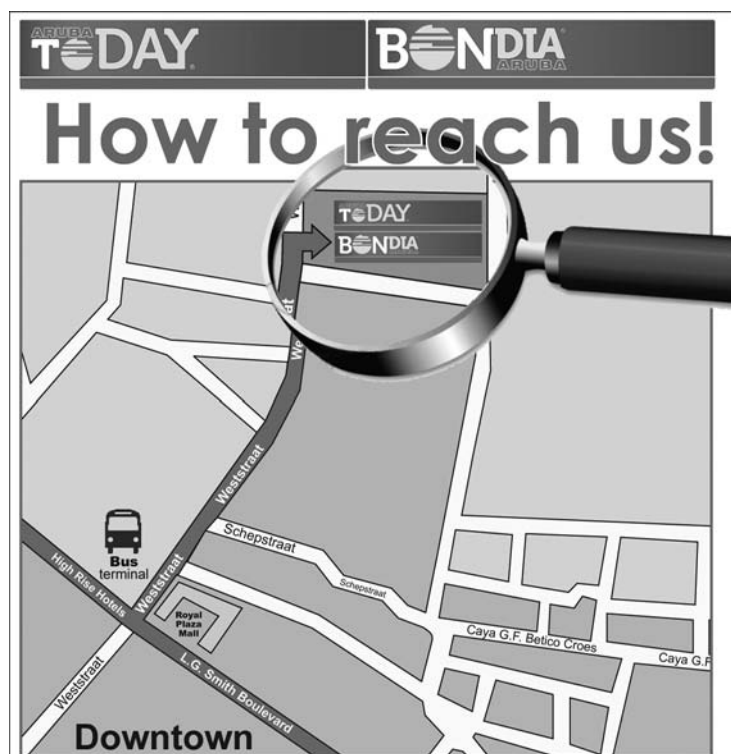
In this photo provided by the University of Maryland School of Medicine, members of the surgical team show the pig heart for transplant into patient David Bennett in Baltimore on Friday, Jan. 7, 2022.

Associated Press

company that provided the animal, declined to comment. Griffith said his patient, while very ill, had been recovering fairly well from the transplant when one morning he woke up worse, with symptoms similar to an infection. Doctors ran numerous tests to try to understand the cause, and gave Bennett a variety of antibiotics, antiviral medication and an immune-boosting treatment. But the pig heart became swollen, filled with fluid and eventu-

ally quit functioning. "What was the virus doing, if anything, that might have caused the swelling in his heart?" Griffith asked. "Honestly we don't know." The reaction also didn't appear to be a typical organ rejection, he said, noting the investigation still is underway. Meanwhile doctors at other medical centers around the country have been experimenting with animal organs in donated human bodies and are anxious to attempt formal studies in

living patients soon. It's not clear how the pig virus will affect those plans. □



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Change of guard? Alcaraz overpowers Nadal at Madrid Open

By **TALES AZZONI**
AP Sports Writer

MADRID (AP) — This time, the Spanish player being celebrated on center court wasn't Rafael Nadal.

The loud cheers from spectators at the Caja Mágica in Madrid were, instead, directed at the teenage sensation considered the Spanish successor to the all-time great Nadal.

In a clash of generations, 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz overcame an injury to defeat his idol 6-2, 1-6, 6-3 in the Madrid Open quarterfinals on Friday.

The teen recovered from a bad ankle twist early in the second set to earn his first victory against Nadal, marking what could be the beginning of a change of guard in Spanish tennis.

"It's obvious there's (a change in guard)," Nadal said. "He turned 19 yesterday, I'm almost 36 years old. If (the change) begins today or not, we will find out in the next months. I'm happy for him. He was better than me in several aspects of the game."

Nadal also was loudly supported throughout the match, and the five-time champion received a huge ovation as he left the court. Alcaraz was emotional afterwards.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates after winning a set during a match against Spain's Rafael Nadal at the Mutua Madrid Open tennis tournament in Madrid, Friday, May 6, 2022.

Associated Press

"It means a lot to me to beat Rafa, to beat the best player in the history on clay," he said. "This is the result of all the hard work I've done."

It was Nadal's first loss to a Spaniard in six years, since to Fernando Verdasco at the 2016 Australian Open. He had a 138-21 record against his countrymen before facing Alcaraz for a third time.

The ninth-ranked Alcaraz is the youngest ever semifi-

nalist in Madrid. He will next face top-ranked Novak Djokovic, who eased past Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 6-4.

Still far from his best form after a six-week injury lay-off, Nadal predicted a hard time keeping up with the energy of Alcaraz. He was right early on, as the youngster overpowered him to easily win the first set with three breaks.

But Alcaraz lost momentum after needing medical attention for his right

ankle, losing 20 of the next 22 points as Nadal cruised through the second set.

"It was a little bit painful, but it was no reason to do the second set that I have done," Alcaraz said. "I think that I have let myself go. I was thinking of my ankle all the time and not on playing the match."

The match also was interrupted in the second set after a fan became ill in the stands.

Both players got off to a

great start this season; both have a tour-leading three titles already.

Nadal's run was hampered by a rib stress fracture he sustained in his semifinal win against Alcaraz in Indian Wells. Nadal saved four match points to get past David Goffin in a third-round match that lasted more than three hours on Thursday.

He said it was a positive balance for him after winning two matches following his injury layoff.

"It's an easy loss to digest in that regard, because we knew what we could expect here," he said. "My only dream is (to) be in Paris (for the French Open) healthy enough and physically good enough to compete at the highest level possible."

Three-time Madrid champion Djokovic had little trouble against Hurkacz. The Serb took advantage of Hurkacz's slow start and took a 3-0 lead after the Polish player ceded his first service game by hitting long.

Another spate of unforced errors cost Hurkacz a second-set break when he smacked a forehand long. Djokovic's dominance was never ended and he won on his fourth match point. □

Brittney Griner detained in Russia as Mercury opens season



Phoenix Mercury center Brittney Griner pauses on the court during the second half of a WNBA basketball game against the Seattle Storm, Sept. 3, 2019, in Phoenix.

Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The Phoenix Mercury open the season at home Friday night against the Las Vegas Aces.

One player who won't be

on the bench will be prominently on everyone's minds: Brittney Griner.

As the Mercury and the rest of WNBA move forward in the 2022 season, Griner is

nearing the three-month mark of her detention in Russia, with no timetable for her release.

"We think about her every day," Mercury guard Skylar Diggins-Smith said recently. "We love her and we're going to continue to carry her legacy, her voice and play in her honor until she gets back here with us."

Griner was detained on Feb. 17 after authorities at the Moscow airport said they found vape cartridges that allegedly contained oil derived from cannabis in her luggage, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The Biden administration determined Griner is being wrongfully detained and she has a hearing set for

May 19.

The WNBA will honor Griner with a floor decal with her initials on her No. 42 in arenas across the league as she continues to be detained.

A 6-foot-9 center, Griner and WNBA career leading scorer Diana Taurasi have been the key cogs for a Mercury franchise that won the 2014 WNBA title and reached the final last season, losing to the Chicago Sky.

Griner is a six-time All-Star and won consecutive WNBA Defensive Player of the Year awards in 2014-15. She had one of the best seasons of her nine-year WNBA career in 2021, leading the WNBA in blocked shots while finishing second

in scoring and sixth in rebounding.

Griner again was expected to play a key role for the Mercury this season after the team bolstered its roster with the additions of Tina Charles and Diamond DeShields.

Now Phoenix must adjust to playing without Griner.

"Once you bounce the ball, you start blowing the whistle, that's all you're really focused on when you're a competitor," Mercury first-year coach Vanessa Nygaard said. "In basketball, at any time, somebody could be injured or something could happen and they wouldn't be available, and you got to fight with what you got in the moment." □

20 horses, full house: Kentucky Derby returns with no limits

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Twenty eager colts breaking from the starting gate, a full house for the first time in three years, and a Kentucky Derby lacking a dominant favorite.

Things could get interesting Saturday at Churchill Downs, where the winners in 2019 and 2021 were disqualified.

The biggest question for these 3-year-olds is whether they can handle running 1 1/4 miles while jostling for position in front of the biggest crowd they'll ever see and hear.

"Things can get a little dodgy throughout the race, having to go through holes and take dirt and take some bumps along the way," trainer Chad Brown said. "You just never know what's going to happen when you open the gate."

Zandon is the early 3-1 favorite and breaks from the No. 10 post, which has produced the second-most winners with nine. The dark bay colt is trained by Brown, seeking his first Derby win after six losses.

"It would mean everything," said Brown, who has had his own stable for 15 years. "It's so hard to get these Derby horses, especially the favorite."

After two years of COVID-19 restrictions, the Derby returns in all its noisy, colorful glory. Attendance is back to full capacity, which means about 150,000 people jammed into Churchill Downs, dressed to the nines and fortified by mint juleps served in souvenir glasses. Post time is 6:57 p.m. EDT.

"You want to adopt the philosophy that it's just another race, but of course most definitely it's not just another race," said Barbados-born trainer Saffie Joseph Jr., who saddles White Abarrio.

In 2019, winner Maximum Security was disqualified for interference and Country House wore the garland of red roses.

In 2020, an eerie silence enveloped the track when no fans were allowed because of the pandemic and the race was pushed back to



Kentucky Derby entrant Messier works out at Churchill Downs Friday, May 6, 2022, in Louisville, Ky. The 148th running of the Kentucky Derby is scheduled for Saturday, May 7.

Associated Press

September. Last year, the Derby returned to its usual spot on the first Saturday in May with attendance limited to about 52,000. Steve Asmussen has won

more races in North America than any other trainer, but he's never won the Derby in 23 tries. He'll saddle Epicenter, the early 7-2 second choice that earned his first career victory at Churchill Downs last fall.

"You have no control over how 20 3-year-olds will handle this volume of crowd for the first time," Asmussen said. "None of them obviously has been in a race that's had that many runners in it."

The 148th Derby is missing horse racing's household name: Bob Baffert. The Hall of Fame trainer with a record-tying six victories was banned by Churchill Downs this year and next after last year's winner, Medina Spirit, flunked a post-race drug test. □



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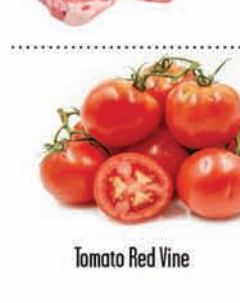


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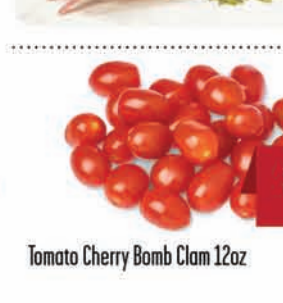


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